

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00448 111654Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0448

PASS USDA/ERS/SCHOONOVER AND FAS/MEEKER/NOVOTNY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAGR, UR
SUBJECT: PARTY LETTER TO FARMERS

1. ON JANUARY 8, 1977, CENTRAL PRESS CARRIED CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONGRATULATORY LETTER TO FARMERS ON RECORD GRAIN CROP IN 1976, WITH FRONT-PAGE PLACEMENT. THIS IS FIRST APPEARANCE, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, IN PRESS OF THE GRAIN CROP FIGURE OF 223.8 MMT (ACTUALLY ROUNDED TO 224), EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON DECEMBER 16, 1976, ON MOSCOW RADIO AND AG. MINISTER MESYATS GAVE IT TO FOREIGN NEWS-MEN LAST WEEK.

2. LETTER, HOWEVER, CAUTIONS AGAINST "SELF-SATISFACTION" AND STATES THAT, DESPITE ENORMOUS EFFORTS IN 1976, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE EVERYWHERE TO OVERCOME THE EFFECT OF BAD WEATHER AND THAT FINAL PRODUCTION RESULTS, PARTICULARLY IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION, WERE LOWER THAN ANTICIPATED IN PLANS AND "OBLIGATIONS". FARMERS ARE THEN WARNED THAT BAD WEATHER COULD STRIKE AGAIN IN 1977 AND THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS.

3. SOME OF THE SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES MENTIONED, WHICH
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REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION, INCLUDED (A) INCREASED MOISTURE PRESERVATION PRACTICES; (B) USE OF FERTILIZER; (C) IMPORTANCE OF WINTER WHEAT CROP; (D) HIGH MOISTURE CONTENT OF GRAIN CROP AND SPOILAGE DANGER; AND (E) MEASURES TO INCREASE MEAT PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION. FERTILIZER LOSSES OF 1976 WERE ATTRIBUTABLE TO TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: LETTER ON WHOLE CONTAINED NO IMPORTANT NEW FACTS FOR SOVIET PEOPLE. PROVIDING AN ACTUAL FIGURE ON THE GRAIN CROP IS NEWS, BUT FACT THAT 1976 GRAIN CROP WAS OF BUMPER PROPORTIONS WAS ANNOUNCED MONTHS AGO. FEATURING OF LETTER IN PRESS APPEARS TO SIMPLY BE CONTINUATION OF RECENT PARTY POLICY OF FREQUENT AGRICULTURAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES. THESE ARTICLES ALL SHOW THE PARTY IN CONTROL, AND THE CORRECTIVE MEASURES BEING TAKEN ARE ENUMERATED OR ELABORATED. THEY, OF COURSE, HIGHLIGHT AGRICULTURAL SUCCESSES, BUT THEY ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FOOD SITUATION, PARTICULARLY MEAT, IS NOT GOOD AND, THOUGH IMPROVEMENT IS EXPECTED, IT MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATE. IT IS ALSO AN IRRESISTABLE OPPORTUNITY TO SOUND THE PATRIOTIC DRUM CALL FOR GREATER EFFORT BY FARMERS AND WORKERS CONNECTED WITH THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO, BY IMPLICATION, ARE THEREFORE LARGELY TO BLAME, ALONG WITH WEATHER, BUT NOT THE PARTY.
TOON

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